

ALEXANDER SIMPSON ATHERTON

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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(1913 -)

Pug Atherton, as he is best known, recalls several anecdotes that illustrate growing up in his well-known and well-respected kamaaina family. He tells of his early education at Punahou, his further education on the East Coast and his return to Hawaii following his graduation from Dartmouth.

Mr. Atherton describes several relationships with his family and friends, along with stories of his business career and his numerous community activities.

Since his retirement, Mr. Atherton has devoted a great deal of time to extensive travelling with his family and to a variety of hobbies, which he details during this interview.

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INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDER SIMPSON ATHERTON

At his home 2150 Puualii Place, Honolulu, Hawaii

October 27, 1986

A: Alexander Atherton

S: Alice Sinesky, Interviewer

A: I was born on March 29, 1913, in Manoa Valley at our home, 2234 Kamehameha Avenue, which is now the home of the president of the University of Hawaii. I don't remember a great deal about my early childhood although I do remember the house as it was with a few relatively small trees at the time, which are now very large, of course. I know in my sister's interview [Mrs. Marjory Atherton Wightman] she mentioned the fact that we did have cows and horses on the property. I don't remember that part of it at all although I do remember our raising chickens.

I remember my parents as being extremely friendly and loving, but at the same time slightly austere. I was acquainted with the fact that they were rather prominent in the community and Dad, in particular, was very anxious to keep this community sense of being one of the community leaders. Although there were times when I was possibly slightly frightened of him, we did have lots of good father/son times together. We would often go on Sunday drives and/or picnics and although Dad and I never did go camping together, I was given the opportunity to go camping with YMCA groups when I was small.

S: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had one of each. Both older. I was the baby of the family and was, needless to say, picked on a bit particularly by my sister. There was never a feeling of animosity although I regarded her as somewhat of a bully for a while. After we both grew up, particularly after I grew up, I thought of her as a great pal and wonderful friend which she remained until her death just three or four years ago.

S: How much older were your brother and sister?

A: My brother was two and a half years older than I was and my sister six.

S: What about your relationship with him?

A: My relationship was always very good with him. I did look up to him. He was, by me anyway, considered the brains of the family. He went through Princeton in short order: a record time I believe. He did get a master's degree in electrical engineering and although we didn't even know about it for two years, he did have a Phi Beta Kappa key. He never let known that he even received same. He came back to Honolulu after his college years and worked at Ewa Plantation as an electrical engineer for three or four years, then joined the (Hawaiian) Telephone Company working his way to the presidency. I always did look up to him, but we were great pals. We did quite a bit of mountain climbing, just hiking, around the mountains of the Island here, both in the Waianae and the Koolaus when we were small.

S: Did he go on the camping trips with the YMCA?

A: Only once. Since he was two and a half years older he was usually in an older group. Once we camped together and enjoyed it very much. This camp was over at Mokuleia.

One particular mountain hike, I remember, we were driven to what was then the hairpin turn on the Pali Drive. Of course, what is now considered the old road. We were let off there and climbed up to the top of Konahuanui, which is the highest mountain in that range at the head of Manoa Valley. We climbed up to the top of it, then came down the other side hoping to come down one of the ridges in the large valley, skirting the large waterfall. We did have a rope with us letting ourselves down over a couple of small waterfalls. Then we came to the big one and the rope was much too short for that, so we had to go back up. By that time darkness overtook us, so we decided the only thing to do was spend the night on the mountain rather than risk a climb down in the darkness.

Needless to say, our parents were a bit on the worried side, but we made it all right the next day. We climbed back up to the top of the mountain and then went down a ridge that we knew had a trail on it and we got down about 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon.

S: How old were you at that time?

A: I don't remember exactly, but I think I was about fifteen or sixteen. It was just one of the boyhood experiences that was a lot of fun. It was a little worrisome to our parents and to a few friends, but it all turned out for the best.

S: Did you and your brother go to the same elementary school?

A: We both went to Punahou. Both my sister and brother graduated from Punahou; however, I did not. I was not doing too well during my sophomore and junior years. I guess I was more interested in play than I was in studying, so my parents thought it better that I go away to prep school for two years, which I did to Tabor Academy in Marion, Massachusetts. I enjoyed my two years there very, very much.

S: Had your family visited the mainland prior to your going to school there?

A: They had visited the mainland many times and they took us kids on three or four different trips that I do remember. However, mostly to the West coast to San Francisco, Berkeley and up to Seattle and a few other parts of Washington.

S: Of course in those days the Eastern schools were favored because the West hadn't built up to a point where it had a very good reputation. Almost everybody headed East to school.

A: Very true. There were several of my friends who went to Eastern prep schools: mainly to Choate, Andover and Deerfield. However, a friend of mine had gone to Tabor Academy and recommended it very highly. My folks looked into it and decided that that was a fine school and it turned out to be exactly that.

One of the main sports offered there was sailing and I enjoyed that very much indeed since the academy was right on Sippican Harbor, which is just off of Buzzard's Bay and eleven miles north of New Bedford. I thoroughly enjoyed my two years there; made a number of good friends, which have lasted and with whom I still correspond once or twice a year.

S: You mentioned that when you were growing up here you and your brother enjoyed the hiking and camping. Were you interested in the water then?

A: Yes, but just to swim and do a bit of surfing. I wasn't particularly interested in it. I wasn't interested in competitive swimming, but just had fun swimming and surfing at Kahala, which was small-time stuff, and out at Waikiki.

A couple of instances I remember when I was very small. One (and this doesn't sound very good) was with smoking and one was with drinking. The smoking incident was when I saw a cigar in the lanai desk drawer which rather intrigued me. Dad kept cigars there for guests, which the folks often had, and I took the cigar one day, went out in the backyard,

climbed up to the top of a monkeypod tree and smoked about half of it until I got a bit woozy and found my way down.

The following day Dad happened to remark that there was one less cigar in the drawer. I, in a very carefree manner, said, "Oh yes, I smoked it." My conscience was clear; however Dad, needless to say, was sure that I hadn't done so. The incident was forgotten and I was happy.

S: Did you ever smoke after that?

A: Yes, I did. After I got to college I started smoking, but I quit many years ago and I'm glad of it.

The other so-called drinking episode was that Dad kept a small bottle of brandy in the medicine cabinet, which he said was for medicinal purposes only, and I'm sure it was because Dad and Mother never touched a drop: they were teetotallers. However, that too intrigued me. One day I took a sip of the brandy and it burned all the way down and that was the last sip of that bottle I ever had. Anyway, I found out what it felt like to have a bit of liquor.

Again, Dad remarked on the level of brandy having been depressed a bit. I said, "Oh yes, I took that drink." Again, he didn't believe me, but my conscience was clear, so all was well. (laughter)

S: You say your parents were both teetotallers yet they entertained a lot. Did they provide liquor for their guests?

A: No, they never had liquor in the house. The only time there was liquor in the house was after my brother was in college and felt that he should do some entertaining of friends and, of course, that was after prohibition had been repealed. The folks finally condescended to allow him to serve liquor in the house. That was the first time; however, they themselves never did.

The only time Dad ever took a drink was in his later years after a golf game at Waialae and I got a boot out of that because whenever we'd go into the clubhouse, I would usually order a Tom Collins or some such drink. Dad would say, "I will have a lemonade and just put a little gin in it, please." After that had happened a couple of times I said, "Dad, why don't you just order a Tom Collins? That's what you're ordering." He said, "You order what you want and I'll order what I want," and he kept on requesting a lemonade with just a little gin in it. (laughter) I always got a boot out of that.

S: Was religious training a strong part of your childhood?

A: Yes, it was. Very strong. From the time we first could, we went to Sunday school every Sunday. Then after a while, right after Sunday school we joined the folks and went to church.

S: And what church was this?

A: Central Union. A Congregational church. We also had religious exercises of short duration every Sunday morning. We learned several psalms, we learned all the books of the bible by heart, we learned many other passages of the bible and bible readings were always held for maybe ten or fifteen minutes. Also, grace was always said before every meal. Whether we had guests or not we always said grace. I really liked that. Because of that and because of the bible training, I do know quite a bit about the bible and I must say that I think I know more than almost all of my friends do and I'm glad of it. It has proved very valuable. I'm one of the few, I think, that has read the bible from cover to cover.

S: How did you spend your summers? A lot of children, and you obviously weren't one of them, had to work part-time.

A: I didn't have to, but I wanted to. I worked, as I remember, at three different summer vacations--two at Hawaiian Trust Company and one at Honolulu Iron Works. At Honolulu Iron Works my pay was the grand and glorious sum of \$5 a week. I was a stock boy there.

At Hawaiian Trust I was a messenger boy in the mailroom and my salary was \$10 a week. Just for fun a very good friend of mine, Johnny Schenck, who also worked there, and I would take our ten dollar bill next door to what was then the Bishop National Bank (now First Hawaiian Bank) and change the ten dollar bill for a ten dollar gold piece. We just got a boot out of carrying a gold piece around with us for a little while. Of course, gold was then exchangeable just as silver is today.

I won't say that either of those experiences gave me a great deal of business experience; however, it kept me out of my parents' hair, it gave me something to do and I really enjoyed the work very much.

Two or three summers we did travelling with our parents. Twice we went up to Berkeley and stayed at the home of very good friends of my parents. One summer we went from Berkeley up into the hills (I don't remember the name of the hills), but to a mountain home of one of these ladies who lived in Berkeley and we had a very enjoyable time up there in the woods. That was my first contact with poison ivy, which is

not a very pleasant memory, but I found out what it was the hard way.

S: I hadn't thought about that. We don't have much here, do we?

A: No, we don't have any poison ivy or poison oak. So that was a brand new experience, but not a particularly pleasant one.

S: Not exactly culturally enriching. (laughter)

A: No, but it taught me something. Then another summer, which was very enjoyable, was spent in Alaska. At least a month of the summer was spent there. We took one of the Princess ships, one of the old Princess ships, up the inland passage and then went up as far north as Fairbanks and visited both Nome and Anchorage and then back to Juneau. That was a very enjoyable trip and I remember some of it in great detail. We also spent about a week at Lake Atlin Hotel, at Lake Atlin, Canada, where we did a good deal of fishing.

One part about the trip to Alaska that I remember very distinctly was our trip to Mount McKinley National Park, which had opened for the first time that year. We were among the first hundred people who ever visited the National Park. When we were there, there were seven people in the park, five of which were Athertons. So we did get the real personal treatment. We had all our meals except breakfast with the park ranger and he personally took us around the park during the day. Also I became acquainted with my first porcupine. Not the hard way. We threw our caps at his tail and got some of the quills that way. It was very interesting, and we also saw bear and deer. Coming from Honolulu, of course, those were oddities to us.

Dad and Mother did quite a good deal of travelling themselves either in the summertime or once or twice while we were in school. We did have my mother's mother, our grandmother, living with us at the time. I always remember her being with us. I think she came to live with the family when I was very small. When I was an infant in arms, I believe.

S: And this was the only grandparent you really knew?

A: I did know my paternal grandmother. She died when I was about twelve or fourteen years old. I do remember her. She lived across the street from us. She was a grand old lady, as was my maternal grandmother. She died at the age of ninety-three just three days before her ninety-fourth birthday. She herself was a very religious person and after

she fell and broke her hip, her doctor, who was my brother-in-law, told her that she would get well although she would never walk again because the bones would not knit. She would be put in a wheelchair and my brother Ballard would rig up an electric motor with it and she would have an electric wheelchair. She said, "No, Peter, this is God's sign that he wants me." She was a deeply religious person and she said, "I'm just going to make myself ready for him." In three days she was gone. She said, "This is God's sign that he is ready for me and as soon as I'm ready for him, I'm going." And she did.

S: You hear of stories like that in many different cultures.

A: Well, here it was right at our front door. I don't remember the exact year, but it was the late twenties, I think.

S: And when you finished prep school?

A: When I finished prep school, I went to Dartmouth College. The reason I picked Dartmouth mainly was because thirty-one of my classmates at Tabor Academy were going to Dartmouth. The head master, assistant head master and three of the professors at Tabor were all Dartmouth men, so naturally we heard a great deal of Dartmouth talk. I had never visited the campus before and knew about it only from hearsay and from reading some literature, so it was quite a surprise when I first went up to college to matriculate in 1931. As I say, thirty-one of my classmates from Tabor were at Dartmouth, so it made going into a strange institution quite easy.

S: Did you come home every summer?

A: Yes, we did with the exception of one summer. One summer my brother and I joined a small group, sponsored by the National Parks Service, on an archaeological expedition to northern Arizona. We spent our summer digging in old Indian cliff dwellings unearthing quite a few artifacts but nothing particularly interesting.

S: This was just a hobby?

A: Just for fun. We had a chance to go to Europe with my sister and her husband, but we opted to go to northern Arizona and dig in the hot sun. We thoroughly enjoyed that experience. We took a few little side trips climbing to the top of Navajo Mountain and into Rainbow Bridge and around the country of Keyenta, which was all Navajo country. It was all very interesting.

S: Was your brother still going to school?

A: He was still in Princeton. I remember with a great deal of joy our bartering for Navajo rugs then. In fact, the rug directly behind you is one that we got there in 1933. A rug like that today will cost somewhere in the neighborhood of four or five hundred dollars. We got them down to thirty-five. I have three other rugs about the same price and also we got quite a few articles of Indian jewelry, turquoise and silver. It was a very interesting trip in many ways.

All of the other summers we did come home and, of course, it meant a three and a half or four day trip by train across continent and then a five day trip by ship, which was always very enjoyable. We naturally looked forward to the trip.

Then Christmas vacations we would take a Greyhound bus to Detroit, where we had an uncle, a brother of my mother's. We would stay with him and his family, consisting of one boy and two girls, for the Christmas vacation. That was always most enjoyable. They were a very fine family. Unfortunately, only one of them is left now. We had lots of fun then. I had myself a girlfriend in Detroit, so I always looked forward to going back.

S: I'm sure that you had no problems adjusting to the mainland, unlike so many other young fellows from here of either Oriental or Hawaiian backgrounds and those who had never travelled to the mainland.

A: You said that you wanted me to mention something about the changes that have come to place here in the Islands. One change that has been just a little difficult for me to make or accept is the change in the status of the Oriental here in Hawaii. When I was in Punahou, there were four Orientals in my class. I became rather friendly with one of them, but just knew the others casually. It was that time when I was growing up as a small boy that the Orientals here in the Islands were primarily the servant class. Of course, there were some Oriental businessmen, but except in the mom and pop stores there were no Oriental executives. So I grew up with the feeling that the Oriental was more of the servant class. We did have Orientals as servants at home. In Manoa we had three yardmen and the chauffeur, who was also the overseer of the yardmen, and one cook and one maid in the house. It was really a little bit hard for me to adjust and realize that the Orientals definitely are our equals.

Many of them have gone way ahead and are at the top of the heap both in the business world and the political world. And professionals, too, of course. Although I have found it a little bit difficult to adjust, I believe I have adjusted. I equate it more or less to the feelings of the blacks in the

South. The people there--the whites have found it a little difficult to adjust to the fact that many of the blacks now are also near or at the top of the heap.

S: But these people coming from the plantations and the servant class, as you say, really instilled in their children the desire for the education. They really worked at it.

A: Yes, they have worked at it. More power to them.

One phase I went through as a boy at Punahou was the motorcycle phase. My brother first had a motorcycle and when he graduated to a larger one, I inherited the smaller one. Two of our very good friends also had motorcycles, so we went through quite a phase of motorcycle riding.

S: I'll bet this caused your parents a few anxious moments.

A: Plus a few gray hairs I'm sure. One of our favorite tricks partly connected with motorcycles--although it's not really a trick--one of our favorite adventures was to sneak out of the house at around eleven-thirty when the last street car went by the house, so the door wouldn't make any noise when we opened it sneaking out of the sleeping porch. I'd go and wheel the motorcycle out into the road and start it further on down the road, so the noise wouldn't wake anyone and then go down to Punahou campus where we would park the bikes in the bushes, climb the fence around the pool and go for a midnight dip. That was always lots of fun.

We thought we were pulling the wool over our parents' eyes, but not so. They knew we were doing it, but I guess they knew it was innocent enough so let it go.

S: I think most parents do that. They're aware of these things, but if it's harmless, well okay.

A: I remember in particular one morning my mother saying, "Well, Zan, how did you enjoy your swim last night?" Of course, I was completely dumfounded. "How did you know?" "Well, you shouldn't leave the wet towel on the floor." (laughter)

S: This was her nickname for you, Zan?

A: She and Dad and a couple of their friends were the only ones who ever called me that.

S: I have to stop now and ask you this. Time and again I have heard people refer to Pug Atherton, so I'm going to have to ask you to please explain that. (laughter)

A: Well, I'll be very glad to explain it, although you may wish to delete it. Johnny Schenck, a very good friend, was the one who gave me that name and exactly how or why it got tacked on to me no one has ever been able to explain. Not even Johnny. But one day he arrived at school and thought it very clever to go up to a friend and say, "Spell out the word 'pig' backwards and say 'funny'." So it came out G-I-P funny. "Ha, ha, you sure do." That was a big joke. Then after that became slightly tiresome he and I would greet each other in the morning by saying, "Gup funny." G-U-P funny. So the greeting was usually, "Gup funny." "No, I don't. You do." That was the end of that. Then for some unknown reason the word G-U-P got transferred to P-U-G and then for another unknown reason that name got attached to me. And that name has stuck ever since and that started when I was either in the freshman or sophomore class in Punahou.

S: Oh, that's funny and I can't tell you how many times I've heard it.

A: There are friends of mine in the East who haven't the slightest idea that my first name is Alexander. It's just Pug period. As I say, you may wish to delete that, but that's the full story.

S: No, I think that's an important historical fact--how you got that nickname. (laughter)

Okay, now we can move on to something else.

A: As far as my college days were concerned they were most enjoyable. I'm afraid I was not too much of a book lover, although I did enjoy the scholastic end of it. However, my great love while in college was skiing. As I've told a great many of my friends, once I got to learn how to ski, I just fell in love with the sport and used to ski about eight days a week. Skiing was just starting to find it's own in the East around that time, which was the early thirties, and many ski tows were just starting up. Several times we'd go out and see them installing a ski tow and wait around until the rope was hitched up and get free rides on the ski tow all day, as long as we'd break trails for them, which, of course, we were more than happy to do. Again, I made many good and lasting friends while at Dartmouth.

S: What did you major in?

A: I majored in psychology mainly because it interested me and because I just enjoyed my professors in that subject. There were two or three excellent professors. As a matter of fact, I kept up correspondence with one of them for several years after graduating.

S: But you knew that you were coming back to Hawaii. There was never any doubt in your mind?

A: Never any doubt. I never wanted to live anywhere else. I did live in New York for a matter of four months. I lived in San Francisco for a total of a little over a year, but I never had any doubts that I wanted to come back to Hawaii to live. I still think that this is the finest place. I've seen many parts of the world, almost all of them, but I'll still come back to Hawaii.

S: And what year did you come back then? After your graduation?

A: I was in the class of 1935 but did take one extra year, so really finished college in 1936. I came back here, worked for Castle & Cooke for a year and a half and then went up to San Francisco to work for Matson Navigation Company primarily as a training course. I worked in San Francisco for nine months, then to New York for four months, and then back to San Francisco for three or four months and then on the SS Mariposa, which had the Australian run. I was on her for six months working in the purser's department. That was a thoroughly enjoyable stint of duty.

After my sojourn with Matson, the total of which was about two and a half years, I came back here to the Islands in 1939 and went back to work for Castle & Cooke. In 1941 along came the war and for two months I worked for the FBI and then was dismissed, as an order from Washington, inasmuch as the delimitation agreement was signed, limiting or designating the duties of Army intelligence, Navy intelligence, and FBI. Since I was a special employee of the FBI, I was automatically let go. Then I joined the Naval Intelligence and got my commission three months later.

I was in Naval Intelligence right here on Oahu all during the war; part of the time here in the Honolulu office; part of the time over at the Kaneohe Naval Air Station, which was thoroughly enjoyable duty.

S: And somewhere about that time you got married.

A: Yes, as a matter of fact, I got married just before the war started. We got married on October 8, 1941.

S: And where did you meet your wife? Tell me about that.

A: Well, that question's been asked several times and we have a stock answer: we met in the gutter.

S: Okay. I think we'd better explain that, too.
(laughter.)

A: I'll be glad to. Burta had a younger sister, Sparky, who was married at the family home on Noela Drive. This was early in 1941. After the wedding (at which I was a late stayer) four of us got in a car and decided to go into Honolulu to continue the festivities after the wedding reception. On the way into the city we were hit broadside by a car that ran a stop sign, were flipped over a couple of times, all four of us were thrown out of the car, which was a Ford phaeton, and we actually landed in the gutter. Both my wife and I were temporarily knocked out, but when we came to we found ourselves in the gutter with ambulance attendants looking us over.

We ended up in the hospital--I with just a broken collarbone, my wife with a broken arm, two fingernails ripped out and cuts on her head but nothing really serious. That was where the romance started--in the hospital. I, of course, was very mobile with just a broken collarbone, so spent most of my days and evenings in her room.

That was where we started the game of one-handed, left-handed cribbage. We kept up that little tradition for many years playing five out of seven games every October 8th, and it had to be one-handed, left-handed. We'd each hold half of the deck of cards and shuffle and deal by just taking one apiece off the top. So we got quite adept at the art of one-handed, left-handed cribbage.

S: But you had known her prior to the wedding?

A: I had known her very slightly, but just to say hello. I'd never had a date with her and never knew her any better than as a mere acquaintance.

S: Now when did this wedding take place?

A: The wedding was in early '41.

S: And you didn't waste too much time then. (laughs)

A: No, not too much. I saw no reason to waste any more time. I was, let's see, twenty-seven at the time. We were engaged in July and I went back to Denver early in October and we were married in Denver on October 8. We spent the first three days in Colorado Springs and then drove out to the West coast. Then we came back here and lived in what used to be my parents' summer home right on Kahala Beach. We lived there for eleven years. We built this home and moved in February of 1951, and we've been here ever since.

S: It was certainly fortunate that you were stationed here during World War II.

A: Oh yes, it was very fortunate. In 1945 the family started; first a girl, then a boy, then another girl. It's been a very, very interesting life and very enjoyable.

S: Would you like to tell me about your career after the military service.

A: I can't say that my career in the business world has been an outstanding one although it has been very enjoyable. After the war I went back to Castle & Cooke where I worked for three or four years and became rather uninterested in the work I was doing. I left the company in 1950, I believe it was.

I did nothing really constructive in the business world for several months and then worked for the Honolulu Community Chest in their office and started the payroll deduction plan which really took hold and is now quite important in the fund raising part of the Community Chest.

S: How did you get that idea?

A: Well, the idea was given to me and it was my job to pound the pavements and go around from company to company and try to sell the idea to the bosses. Most of them thought that it was a good idea and said they would at least give it a try. A large percentage of them (I would say about eighty-five to ninety percent) found out that it did work and worked very well. So a real formal program of payroll deduction giving was started.

S: To this day it provides a very substantial base.

A: It does and, of course, it is what I consider a painless way of giving. A small amount is subtracted from the paycheck each month and that consists of their donation to the Community Chest by many, many people here in Honolulu, especially the office workers.

I worked for the Community Chest for about a year and then was offered a job with the Hawaiian Trust Company in the stock brokerage and investment department, which I was very happy to accept. I was with Hawaiian Trust for about seventeen or eighteen years. I enjoyed my work there very, very much. Then, again, it got to be a little monotonous and I wasn't, as I might say, getting anywhere in the company and decided I could do much better severing myself from the formal business world and doing more volunteer work and doing some of the things that I wanted to do on my own--some of which was travelling. My wife and I started travelling in 1950, I believe it was, or 1949 and we have travelled every year since then.

- S: Did you include the children on your travels?
- A: We tried to include them every second or third year so that they, too, have done a good deal of travelling.
- S: I was sure that you would try to include them because you realized from your own experiences with your parents how important it would be to them.
- A: Yes, plus the fact that we thoroughly enjoyed their company. They are all very good travellers and I think the bug has bitten them to a certain extent and they all travel now whenever they can. They all have their own families so it's a little bit difficult to get away with small ones to care for.
- S: Let's name the children and talk a little about them if you'd like.
- A: Our daughter Balby, christened Burta Lee and nicknamed Balby, was born in 1945. She has always been a very resourceful, energetic person. She loves the outdoors thoroughly and is very adept at sports and also with tools for do-it-yourself work around the house. She was married and has one son. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't work out too well. She is now divorced, but is living with her son in Kona on the Big Island.

Our son Frank is now married. He spent one year at Ripon College [Wisconsin] for his formal education after graduating from Punahou and the Hawaii Preparatory Academy and then one year at the University of Hawaii and then four years in Uncle Sam's Navy during the war, of course. This did him a great deal of good and really made a man out of him. After his stint in the Navy he went to work for Hawaiian Trust Company in the investment department, where he still is. He's doing very well and enjoying it very much. He married a girl from South Carolina, marrying her in South Carolina. He lives here on the slopes of Diamond Head; has a family of one and a quarter. He has a little girl who is almost three and the second one's expected in May.

Our youngest, Marjory, lives in Long Beach, California, is married to an attorney and has two daughters aged almost six and almost four. We see her two or three times a year. They usually come down here once or twice and we go up there once or twice. And, of course, the telephone is always very handy.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

- A: One of the interesting investments that my brother and I both made several years ago was in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. Dad at one time was president of the Star-Bulletin

and, as a matter of fact, did have the controlling interest in the number of shares in the company.

Shortly after Governor Wallace Rider Farrington ended his governorship, he went back to the Star-Bulletin and purchased enough shares from Dad so that he, in turn, had the controlling interest. That, primarily, was Governor Farrington's love. We inherited stock in the Star-Bulletin from our father and were stockholders in the company when the major part of the company, owned by the Farrington estate, was up for sale. A group of five of us ended up by purchasing the paper from the Farrington estate.

I have never been active in the workings of the Bulletin but am an officer of the Bulletin, but just in title only. As I say, I do not actively work in the business. However, since we acquired the paper it has been sold to the Gannett chain, so we are now a part of the Gannett newspaper chain. It has been a very interesting and, I might say, a very profitable investment and venture.

Other than that my main interests are in various community activities and also in my own personal hobbies, which I do enjoy very much. The community activities include a chairmanship of the board of managers of Mid-Pacific Institute, which I've enjoyed for many years and still do. It is a very fine institution and I have been very interested in the developing of the school.

Another interest has been the Bishop Museum. Another interest, although not directly for myself alone, has been Hawaii Preparatory Academy. Both my wife and son are on the board there and I guess you might call it as a phenomenon of osmosis, I have acquired a great deal of interest in the school. Another interest has been in radio station KHPR, the Hawaii public radio station, which I regard as a very fine station and very well run. I'm on the board there and do find that it is very interesting. Lately I've become a member of the board of the Pacific Tropical Botanical Gardens, whose main headquarters are on the island of Kauai, but who do have meetings and take trips to various parts of the world.

S: This sense of community responsibility really comes from your father, doesn't it?

A: Yes, it does. Dad was always very interested in community activities and was very active in them.

S: There are certain families in the Islands that are well noted for this and yours is one of them. It's outstanding, I think, the things that have been accomplished.

A: Well, my feeling is that the community has been awfully good to us--why not give something back to the community. At least, I do my best. Still I do find the work very, very interesting and very rewarding. It gives a person a warm feeling of satisfaction. There are lots of people who do need help and it's enjoyable to help them whenever and wherever possible.

For many years I was interested in what was originally the Hawaii Cancer Society. I happened to be its first president and helped to get it started here. Later on we became affiliated with the American Cancer Society. I have continued my interest in that society, although not quite as active as I was for the first several years. Those are the institutions that I can think of right now.

S: You had mentioned that you wanted to have more time for travel and your hobbies.

A: Hobbies consist mainly in doing things with my hands. Again, I think I got this from my dad. He was a great do-it-yourselfer and fix-it-yourselfer.

S: And your daughter got it from you then? (laughter)

A: Yes, I believe so. Our youngest daughter and son, also, have this same knack. Our youngest daughter, as a matter of fact, is the one who does all the fixing of things around the house. Her husband, who is a very successful attorney, has to ask which side of a hammer to hold, so she does the manual work.

Hobbies consist mainly of woodworking. The interest started out when I was in a manual training class in Punahou School under John Mahoney and I learned woodworking skills while there. Dad recognized the fact that both my brother and I were interested in woodworking and helped it along by acquiring some nice machine tools for us. We were very active when small and growing up in a little workshop that we had on the property. After becoming married my interest has continued and I've done a great deal of woodworking, both as to making things around the house and making articles as presents and in the last few years in making things for the Queen's Hospital Festival of Trees. As a matter of fact, I'm still doing that and in the middle of a project right now.

Another hobby has been putting together Heathkits, electronic kits, radios, wind gauges, rain gauges, doorbells, musical automobile horns, many other things. Door chimes (several around here), recording barometer, humidity gauge, weather station, a clock that is correct to within one five hundredth of a second getting its signal from the observatory on Kauai who gets its signal from satellite directly from London. And both shortwave and longwave radios, a few of

which are in this room. Anyway, I thoroughly enjoy it. Here's a table full of some things for a project I'm not quite finished.

S: Did you do that lamp? (indicating a wooden one on his desk)

A: Yes, I did that one. So I've had a great deal of fun with both of those things.

Another hobby has been stamp collecting. Dad was a great stamp collector specializing in Hawaiian stamps. In fact he had the largest collection of Hawaiian stamps anywhere, which collection he gave to the [Honolulu] Art Academy and which collection has recently been purchased by Thurston Twigg-Smith, who now has the finest collection of Hawaiians in existence. I was not interested in collecting Hawaiian stamps because, almost literally, they were coming out of my ears when I was growing up, seeing Dad poring over his collection night after night.

I became interested in a specialized collection and that is of airmail stamps of the world. I gradually, over a period of many years, have acquired an almost complete collection of air mails. This has been very interesting, very time consuming, but a lot of fun. The interest has waned during the past two or three years inasmuch as there are few left that I need. I'm still out after a half a dozen or so but they are very, very scarce and hard to come by.

Another hobby for quite a while was the garden; again, inherited from Dad who was quite a gardener. I did quite a good deal of grafting of hibiscus, producing new variety grafting and cross-pollinating, producing several new varieties. This was always a lot of fun. My interest in gardening has waned since that time however, but I do still get my hands dirty and muddy now and then.

I don't know if you call this a hobby, but I love to collect trivia. I think I have about a full bookshelf of books on trivia and facts. I collect a lot of useful bits of trivia all the way from the weight of the giant Cheops pyramid to the number of stairs in the Empire State Building. I even have a book which has the value of π (the mathematical value of $P-I$, π) to one million places. It took me about a year and a half and sixteen letters to finally track down this book whose authors live in a small town about fifty miles outside of Paris. But I finally got it. It was given to me with the compliments of the authors. It is one of those bits of information which, of course, no household should be without. One should be accurate. Three point one four one six will not do. (laughter)

One hobby that I may take up some day, but so far the bug has not bitten me, is computers. Some of my friends have their own personal computers, but so far I've had no interest in getting one, mainly because I haven't the slightest idea what I'd put on it.

S: I'd bet you'll graduate to that.

A: Could be. I don't know. Time will tell. Unless time runs out.

S: Oh, I'd say at least ninety-three or ninety-four like your grandmother. It's these interests that keep people going. Getting up every day and having these things.

A: Another hobby (at least it's gotten to be a hobby) is the making of needlepoint. For several years when we travelled and my wife would be doing needlepoint, I would have read all the books I had on the trip and would have played solitaire 500 times and there were times when time hung heavy on my hands, when during the itinerary the day and evening "at leisure" would come by. Burta kept saying, "Why don't you learn how to needlepoint? I think you'd enjoy it." I pooh-poohed the idea saying, "Oh, that's woman's work." Finally, in desperation more or less, once while in Fiji I said, "All right, teach me how to do needlepoint." Well, she was about two-thirds of the way through one canvas and she taught me how to needlepoint and I wouldn't give it back to her: I finished it.

S: Did you beat Rosie Grier to this?

A: No, I think he beat me. I've seen his book but I've never read it.

S: Well, he really quashed that idea of it being "woman's work," didn't he? (laughs)

A: Yes, I think so. Since then, since I learned how to needlepoint I've gotten to enjoy it very much.

S: It's relaxing, it's therapeutic. Did your wife do those pillows? (indicating couch)

A: No, her sister did those two. I did the one at the end and I'm doing one right here. (on frame) There are quite a few around the house both on cushions and frames that I've done. It's very enjoyable. On several trips I have pulled out my needlepoint on ships or on trains and people have smiled a little bit, but on two or three different occasions a man has come up and said, "I don't know why I didn't bring mine along, but I guess I was a little hila hila (ashamed) to do it. I wish I had now that I see you're doing it." People seem to take it as why not? Good for you.

- S: There was a point where it would have been looked at askance, but now, no.
- A: Speaking of that I remember my father being quite a good knitter. He took up knitting, again, in desperation of something to do when he was ill. He was almost bedridden for a period of almost six months when he was quite young. His mother finally taught him how to knit. He got to be very expert at knitting. Mother loved to tell the story of their going cross continent by train during their honeymoon, which I believe was 1902. A lady across the aisle from Mother and Dad was doing some knitting and she got into quite a tangle. Dad had been watching her. He leaned over and said, "If you don't mind madam, I think I know where you made your mistake." She looked at him with surprise, handed him the knitting, he ripped out a couple of rows, started the needles again and kept on going. (laughter) The whole car was in an uproar of laughter but he enjoyed it and she was very happy in that her mistake was corrected and she went on with her knitting.
- S: Along those lines, Judge Marumoto told us that during World War I when he was attending school on the Big Island, they had everybody knitting scarves and so forth for the soldiers. He said that he was quite a knitter. It was totally acceptable.
- A: Well, it helps me spend many evenings here. I do enjoy reading very much but I do most of my reading while on trips. I don't do a great deal of reading at home. It's enough to get through the paper and the too many magazines that we get.
- S: And you still travel a good bit?
- A: Yes, we do. Earlier this year I was unwell for quite a time so we have not made any trips this year; however, I am about to make one down to Indonesia with my son and older daughter.
- S: When's that going to be?
- A: We leave here early morning the seventh of November and will be gone for three weeks. We go down to Bali and get on a chartered boat. There will probably only be about thirty or thirty-two passengers. We go to fourteen different islands east of Bali; all in the Indonesian chain. The trip will be primarily going ashore and seeing native craftwork, dancing, singing, scenery in general and then spending quite a good deal of time either scuba diving or snorkeling. Both of my children--all three of them, as a matter of fact--have their certificates in scuba diving, so they're looking forward to that. I do only snorkeling, but if I were twenty years old again or even thirty, I'd take up scuba diving. So

we're looking forward with great anticipation to this trip.

One possible incident of interest would be that when I was still very young--I don't remember how old I was--probably ten, twelve or fourteen--I overheard a conversation that Dad had with Mother. Dad had been urged by many of his friends to try and run for governor of the then Territory. I heard both him and Mother talking about it, the pros and cons, and finally they decided no, Dad having said, "My family is more important than my political ambitions of which I really have none."

I think it was partly because of his love of his family that he decided not to get into politics and I know that all of us were very glad that he made that decision although we knew nothing about it for several years except for the conversation that I overheard.

There was a time shortly after the Community Chest started here, the goal being somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50,000 or \$60,000, when the goal had not been reached there were three men in the city--I don't remember who the other two were--but Dad was one of them--who would make up the difference. That went on for many years until it got to be just too big a burden and it was also thought that the community should jolly well meet the goal. It should contribute enough to help them reach the goal.

S: I can see where it started out as a great idea, but people could take the attitude that if the goal weren't reached, it would be made up.

A: And it was made up for several years.

S: I'm sure that your wife has been active in the community for a number of years, too.

A: Yes, she has. As I mentioned earlier she is on the board of Hawaii Preparatory Academy. She was interested for many years in Fernhurst, which is the living quarters of the YWCA. She has also been interested in the Queen's Hospital Auxiliary. She started with the Festival of Trees when it was one year old and kept on with that. She has been treasurer of that for many years.

S: And that grew and grew and grew beyond all expectations.

A: Yes, it certainly did and it got to be a little too big and got to be more of a chore than a pleasure, which it had been for so many years. She still does a little bit of work for them and I do work for them in the shop although they're no longer called the Queen's Festival of Trees. They're now a much smaller group that call themselves the (I'm not sure

exactly what it is) Queen's Hospital Fair. It's a much smaller one.

S: They have a slightly different approach to it. It would be a shame to lose it altogether because it was so wonderful.

A: Yes, but it did get to be a real chore, mainly because it was just the old-timers who were willing to keep on going. It was impossible to get new and younger blood.

S: Yes, because so many of the younger women are working now whether they have to work or not.

A: That's mainly it. Working and, of course, families to take care of. And they don't have the help that we used to have when we were kids.

S: That's another one of the changes that has taken place.

A: And working for the festival does require a full day's work once a week every month of the year starting in early February, getting ready for the December festival. And it does mean volunteer work almost around the clock the couple of weeks before the festival opens and then, of course, every day while the festival is underway. So it just got to be a little bit too big, and as I say, almost burdensome, so they decided to end it. At least as it was. There are, however, a few diehards who want to continue it.

S: It's going to have to be on a smaller scale though. It'll be nice.

And what does she do for hobbies besides needlepoint?

A: Takes care of me. (laughter) As I say, she is with Hawaii Preparatory Academy on the board and does do work there. She's on committees.

S: You've never been golfers?

A: Yes, we have been golfers. We haven't played much during the past year or so. However, we were never real died in the wool enthusiastic golfers. We were what we called "Sunday golfers." There was a group of four couples of us who played golf for quite some time every Sunday afternoon. Once in a while we'd play nine holes during the week, but not very often.

- S: It's a great way to get out.
- A: Yes, it is. We might take it up again next year.
- S: You had mentioned that while you were back on the East coast the sailing. Did you continue when you got back here?
- A: Yes, we did. My brother and I bought a PC (a Pacific Class) racing boat--a thirty-one foot racing boat and we had our headquarters in Pearl Harbor as members of the Pearl Harbor Yacht Club and we raced there in '39, '40 and '41. As a matter of fact, Burt and I were planning to go for a sail in Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, but there was a slight interruption.
- S: Oh, tell me where you were and what you were doing that morning.
- A: We were in our home at Kahala. We had been to a very late party at the Royal Hawaiian the night before, not getting home until about two-thirty in the morning and so we were awakened about eight-thirty or a quarter of nine the following morning by the phone ringing. A phone call from my sister. "Do you have the radio on?" "The radio! Good Lord, no! You just woke us up from a sound sleep and we're going back to sleep. Hang up." She said, "No, turn on the radio. Something is going on." I said, "What are you talking about?" "Something funny is going on at Pearl Harbor. The report is that it's been bombed." I said, "Oh sure, just another maneuver. Just practice war. Forget about it." She said, "No, turn on your radio."

We finally, reluctantly, did and heard the announcement that Pearl Harbor had been bombed and when they came to the line, "and as the planes flew over Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field the insignia of the Rising Sun could be seen on the wing tips," I knew that it was no game. They would not say that over the radio here if it had not been the real McCoy.

So we were told on the radio to fill your tubs full of water in case the water supply was contaminated. If you were on the beach, fill buckets full of sand in case of incendiary bombs. There will be a complete blackout tonight so do not turn on any lights except in interior rooms. So we immediately filled the tubs and wash basins full of water and got buckets of sand, living right next to the beach. Then we decided to break the law, as it were, and go out in the car. We went up to Diamond Head to see if we could see anything. We saw a little bit of smoke at Pearl Harbor but nothing much to speak of so we went back to the home and spent the rest of the morning making mayonnaise. That was our great activity on the morning of December 7, 1941.

S: Almost everybody that I've talked to here, as you, thought that it was simply maneuvers. Some people said that it wasn't until two o'clock in the afternoon, depending on where they lived, that they were convinced otherwise.

A: Except for the blackout and the change in work our personal lives weren't disrupted too much. Those of our friends and some relatives were disrupted a bit. As for us, having not started a family by then, we were foot loose ourselves.

S: How did you feel about the martial law?

A: I thought that, of course I didn't enjoy it, but I felt that it had to be. It was the only thing to do.

S: Did you feel that eventually it had gone on too long?

A: Yes, I felt as most other people that it had gone on for too long. Not a great deal too long, but a bit too long. I think that some of the fines that were passed out were very good; donate to the blood bank or give to the Red Cross or put in so many hours of community service, I think was a very good way of meting out justice.

S: Under those conditions.

A: Under those conditions.

S: And the circumstances and time. They were appropriate. Let the punishment fit the crime.

A: I mentioned about my duty in the Naval Intelligence Office over in Kaneohe. That became a place that became known as the playground of the Pacific. The saying went around, "Take down your service flag, Mother. Your son's at Kaneohe." Of course, we did work during the day at our various and sundry jobs; however, we did have a commanding officer of the station who was a very fine man. He worked when he worked, but he played when he played.

I remember particularly one day when he came into the intelligence office, looked over the filing cabinet and said, "Pug, you don't look very busy. Let's go water skiing." I said, "Aye, aye, sir." So, of course, that was an order. A hard order to take. I happened to have water skis over there and he asked about them. I told him I would be very happy to teach him to water ski, which I did in one of the crash boats stationed at the station. From then on it was every Wednesday and every Sunday afternoon we would go water skiing with the commanding officer of the station. We brought our wives over and he enlisted some of the WAVES of the station, some of the pretty secretaries, to go out and water ski and aquaplane, and at the end of the day he'd say,

"The next order is go to your quarters, change and report to my quarters at eighteen thirty." So we'd go over there at eighteen thirty, have cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and a nice buffet dinner after which we would square dance. So you can see it was not exactly rough duty. (laughs)

S: No, but I'm reassured to know that you got your work done first.

A: We did that. (laughs) It did turn out to be very pleasant duty. And then again several new friends were made over there.

S: These friendships made in college and shortly thereafter seem to endure a lifetime.

A: Several of them did with me. I keep in correspondence with half a dozen of them.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

SUBJECT INDEX

- 1 Early childhood in Manoa Valley
Siblings: sister Marjory Atherton Wightman,
brother Ballard
- 2 Relationship with Ballard
Anecdote: hiking Konahuanui with Ballard
- 3 Education: Punahou and Tabor Academy, Marion,
Massachusetts
Mainland travels with family
Swimming and surfing at Kahala and Waikiki
- 3-4 Anecdotes: smoking and drinking
- 4 Family attitude regarding liquor
- 5 Religious training, Central Union Church
Summer work at Honolulu Iron Works and Hawaiian
Trust Company
Friendship with Johnny Schenck
- 5-6 Summer travels: Berkeley, California; Alaska;
Lake Atlin, Canada
- 6-7 Maternal and paternal grandmothers
- 7 Mainland education: Tabor Academy, Marion,
Massachusetts; Dartmouth College, New Hampshire
Summer vacation with Ballard, archaeological
expedition, Arizona
- 8 Summer vacations in Hawaii
Christmas vacations on mainland
Changes in attitudes towards Orientals
- 9 Anecdotes of teen years: motorcycles and midnight
swims at Punahou
- 9-10 Nicknames Zan and Pug
- 10 Dartmouth: studies and skiing
- 11 Early employment: Castle & Cooke and Matson
Navigation
World War II association with Naval Intelligence
Marriage to LeBurta Gates on October 8, 1941
- 12 Description of courtship and marriage

- 13 Business career: Castle & Cooke, Honolulu
Community Chest, Hawaiian Trust Company
- 14 Children: Burta Lee (Balby), Frank and Marjory
- 15 Stock interest in Star-Bulletin, Gannett chain
Community activities: Mid-Pacific Institute, Bishop
Museum, Hawaii Preparatory Academy, KHPR public
radio, Pacific Tropical Botanical Gardens (Kauai)
- 16 Community activities: Hawaii Cancer Society and
American Cancer Society
- 16-18 Hobbies: Woodworking, electronics, stamp
collecting, gardening, collecting trivia books,
needlepoint
- 19 Anecdote: Father's knitting
Present day travelling
- 20 Father's decision not to enter politics
Father's participation in the Community Chest
Wife's participation in community activities:
Hawaii Preparatory Academy, Fernhurst, Queen's
Hospital Auxiliary, Festival of Trees
- 21-22 Golfing and sailing
- 22 Recollections of December 7, 1941
- 23 Views on martial law
- 23-24 World War II association with Naval Intelligence at
Kaneohe

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Watumull Foundation Oral History Project began in June of 1971. During the following seventeen months eighty-eight people were taped. These tapes were transcribed but had not been put in final form when the project was suspended at the end of 1972.

In 1979 the project was reactivated and the long process of proofing, final typing and binding began. On the fortieth anniversary of the Watumull Foundation in 1982 the completed histories were delivered to the three repositories.

As the value of these interviews was realized, it was decided to add to the collection. In November of 1985 Alice Sinesky was engaged to interview and edit thirty-three histories that have been recorded to mark the forty-fifth anniversary of the Foundation.

The subjects for the interviews are chosen from all walks of life and are people who are part of and have contributed to the history of Hawaii.

The final transcripts, on acid-free Permalife bond paper and individually Velo-bound, are deposited and are available to scholars and historians at the Hawaii State Archives, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii and the Cooke Library at Punahou School. The tapes are sealed and are not available.

August 1987